



June 28, 2018

The Honourable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

We are writing to you as members of the Women, Peace and Security Network-Canada (WPSN-C) and other interested organizations and individuals working on women, peace and security issues.

We, the undersigned, call on you to rescind the “Safe Third Country Agreement” with the US in light of the ongoing human rights violations related to immigration at the US-Mexico border, and to call for actions to protect refugees and asylum seekers.

President Trump’s Executive Order signed on June 20th mandates that children remain with their families in detention, but does not repeal the zero-tolerance policy that criminalizes immigrants and their children. The order also does not address nor provide a plan for reunification of the more than 2,000 children who have already been separated and are currently being held in detention centres across the US.

We want to express our deep concern regarding the Trump Administration’s policy of detaining families indefinitely as they attempt to cross into the United States. President Trump’s hostile rhetoric and complete and utter disregard for human rights and international law is alarming. The policy is having irreversible effects on families, exposes boys and girls to sexual abuse and exploitation, and leaves them without basic needs. These are people in need of safe haven, fleeing violence and conflict, persecution and economic hardship. Instead of safety, families experience trauma and suffering as a result of inhumane and illegal treatment.

We, in Canada, know first hand the devastating effects that separation of children from their families has on individuals and communities as a whole. We welcome [Public Safety Minister Goodale’s recent acknowledgement](#) that detention of migrant children also occurs in Canada, and urge the timely development of new legislation to ensure greater oversight of the treatment of detainees in immigration holding centres. Moreover, we continue to have significant work to do to ensure adequate reparations for the suffering inflicted on Canada’s Indigenous communities. It is in acknowledging these truths that we ask the Government of Canada to take urgent action in

denouncing the inhumane treatment of refugees and asylum seekers on the border between Mexico and the US.

Considering the threat asylum seekers face, the US can no longer be considered “safe” in terms of refugee protection. Hence, we ask you to immediately repeal the “Safe Third Country Agreement” between Canada and the US, and to call on the United Nations to demand the Trump Administration uphold its international obligation to ensure basic human rights for immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

We also call on the Government of Canada to denounce the Trump Administration’s policy of detaining families and call for the implementation of effective measures to ensure the protection of women, girls and boys from violence, including sexual abuse, exploitation and harassment. We further ask that Canada call for the reunification of families that have been separated.

We have applauded the Government of Canada’s commitment to feminist principles and for putting the rights of women and girls at the heart of its foreign and development policies. These commitments should matter even more when talking about our neighbour and closest ally. Inaction amounts to complicity.

Respectfully,

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CC:

The Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

His Excellency Marc-André Blanchard, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations

His Excellency David MacNaughton, Ambassador of Canada to the United States